

More Funding for Cost-of-Living Measures



KRG Chairperson Maggie Emualluk and Makivik President Jobie Tukkiapiik signed the transitional funding agreement for Nunavik in December. Québec Premier Pauline Marois (centre).

On December 9, the KRG, the Makivik Corporation and the Québec government signed an agreement concerning additional transitional funding to mitigate the effects of the high cost of living. On top of the \$5 million paid annually by Québec in recent years for regional measures, the government has accepted to invest an additional \$5 million in 2014–2015, \$6 million in 2015–2016 and \$7 million in 2016–2017. The agreement will therefore direct more than \$33 million towards concrete reduction measures.

The KRG, Makivik and Québec also agreed to generate hard data on the region's cost of living through in-depth analysis of Inuit consumer patterns. The two-year study will be carried out by Gérard Duhaime, Canada Research Chair in Comparative Aboriginal Conditions at Université Laval. The results of the study will be used to define effective and long-term solutions.

In the meantime with this additional, transitional funding, the KRG and Makivik will improve existing regional measures, such as the Food Program and the Gasoline Subsidy Program. New measures that promote healthy lifestyles based on Inuit culture could be implemented in future years.

The KRG has been in charge of implementing regional cost-of-living measures since 2007, ensuring that program expenditures remain in line with available funding.

Facts on the Cost-of-Living in Nunavik

- Nunavik organizations have been lobbying Québec on the high cost of living in the region for more than 20 years.
- A first refundable tax credit for individuals living in a northern village was introduced in 1998.
- Regional cost-of-living reduction measures have been funded since 2007.
- An extensive review of federal, provincial and regional relief measures was appended to Plan Nunavik, tabled with Québec in 2010.
- Discussions on the current, additional funding began at a meeting of Québec and Nunavik elected officials held on National Aboriginal Day in June 2013.

Improved Solidarity Tax Credit for Residents

Québec also announced on December 9 that it would double the solidarity tax credit for individuals living in Nunavik. The annual base amount per eligible adult will jump to \$1620 beginning on January 1, 2014, and be indexed annually. The annual base amount per eligible child will, for its part, be maintained at the current level.

The solidarity tax credit is payable by direct deposit to all residents who file their annual income tax returns, even if they have no taxes to pay. This measure targets the most disadvantaged households. Québec has estimated that, of the region's 3500 households, 72% will be eligible for the entire portion of the northern residency component of the solidarity tax credit.



Every spring, the Makivik Corporation's income tax project helps residents in the communities to file annual income tax returns. Project staff (shown in photo).

Fire Fighter Training

In November, 21 volunteer fire fighters from different communities attended training and testing in Kangiqsujuaq and Kuujuaq. The training focused on hazardous material operations. This was the final requirement for Fire Fighter 1 certification. The Fire Fighter 1 program covers about a dozen different subject areas and requires approximately 295 hours of training, academic testing, as well as field testing and evaluation.



Some graduates of the Fire Fighter 1 training program show off their certificates.

Funding for Tourism Development

In January, the KRG signed an agreement with the Québec government for tourism development. The funding commitment was announced in September during Premier Pauline Marois' visit to Nunavik.

Over the next three years, Québec's Minister for Tourism and its Minister of Finance and the Economy will provide \$350,000 annually to:

- Support the development of sustainable products in the region's tourism industry;
- Stimulate investment in the consolidation and diversification of tourism products;
- Provide technical and professional support for tourism partners, businesses and organizations.

This funding will help to develop Nunavik's tourism potential collaboratively with Québec, while preserving Inuit values and traditions. The KRG will work closely with the Nunavik Tourism Association on planning and development, product promotion and marketing.

Ulittaniujalik National Park Project

Further to the completion of its environmental and social impact assessment, the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission recently made public its approval of the park project, subject to certain conditions. Public hearings for the park project were conducted in Kangiqsualujuaq, Kuujuaq and Kawawachikamach in 2011.

Local Infrastructure Development

Nunavik communities face a daunting task developing and operating the infrastructure necessary to deliver essential municipal services. Every project involves many steps, authorizations and other requirements. A presentation given by the KRG Municipal Public Works Department provided a step by step overview of typical infrastructure construction and equipment purchasing processes.

Each of the four main stages was described and issues specific to each stage were explored with KRG Councillors:

- Pre-project considerations (objective, timetable, budget, financing);
- Plans and specifications (work with architects, engineers and other professionals, cost estimates, call for tenders, land and environmental authorizations, site analysis work);
- Construction (site preparation, purchasing of material, building construction); and
- Follow-up.

The main mandate of the KRG Municipal Public Works Department is to assist the communities to secure the infrastructure and equipment necessary for their development and to assume all related responsibilities.

Wild Berry, Seaweed and Other Plants

A local plant research and intervention project is being supported by a number of organizations, including the KRG Regional and Local Development Department. In addition to evaluating the impact of wild berries, seaweed and other plants on insulin resistance and obesity, the project aims to stimulate awareness of healthy eating, and local harvesting and processing opportunities for youth. The KRG plays an ongoing role in this sector by identifying local initiatives aimed at developing food processing activities.



Students and elders from Tasujuaq and Kangiqsualujuaq participated in the research and intervention project last fall.

Empowerment through Prevention and Saqijuq

The KRG is continuing to participate in many prevention activities. A workshop organized in Salluit in the fall on social issues and relationships between parents and teenagers was attended by KRG victim support agents and community reintegration officers. The KRPF prevention team and police officers have also been busy participating in community activities across the region to raise awareness on various issues and foster positive relations.

For its part, the Saqijuq Project has taken another step forward. Approval was obtained at the end of November for a governance structure that places responsibility and accountability with the deputy ministers of health and social services, justice and public security, and senior representatives from the KRG and the Makivik Corporation. In September, the Minister for Social Services and Youth Protection and the Chair of the Regional Partnership Committee were mandated to oversee the effective implementation of the Saqijuq Project.

The aim of Saqijuq is to curb abusive alcohol and drug use with a view to reducing the physical and psychological harm they cause, resulting in over-judicialization and a high number of Nunavimmiut held in prisons. To this end, Saqijuq will nurture community solutions and assist local resources to translate proposals into concrete actions, improving how families and different public services and organizations work together. Regional funding for Saqijuq in 2014 has been earmarked under the Ungaluk Program for safer community programs.

Municipalities and Landholding Corporations

Three KRG departments and the Nunavik Landholding Corporations Association jointly organized an informative workshop in November for northern village mayors and landholding corporation presidents in order to reinforce local collaboration. Northern villages and landholding corporations share many common interests in relation to land use, development, roads and trails, construction issues, as well as traditional subsistence activities and wildlife conservation. The workshop focused on roles and responsibilities in these different sectors, and was genuinely appreciated by the participants.

Community Kitchens Project

The Kativik Local Development Centre along with the Makivik Corporation and Employment and Social Development Canada are implementing a three-year community kitchen project. The Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik is responsible for setting up the first community kitchen in Inukjuak. The project will subsequently be expanded to Kangiqsualujjuaq and Kuujuarapik.

New Ivirtivik Centre in Inukjuak

An Ivirtivik essential skills and employment training centre was opened by the KRG in Inukjuak in October with funding from Employment and Social Development Canada. Participants are helped to focus on real work experience. An Ivirtivik centre in Montreal has been operating at full capacity since it was opened in 2010.

Childcare Centre Construction

The construction of childcare centres in Salluit, Inukjuak and Puvirnituq is almost complete. KRG childcare staff have been visiting the sites along with architects to perform inspections of the new buildings. This childcare centre construction work is funded by the Ministère de la Famille (family). The childcare centres in every community are independent, non-profit organizations.



New childcare centre in Salluit.

Funding for Mining Sector Training

A new two-year agreement was signed this fall with the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (employment and social solidarity). The \$3.8-million will be dedicated to training in the mining sector. The federal and provincial governments have now made funding commitments for training in the mining sector for up to \$8.8 million until the end of 2015.

KRG Council

Henry Alayco of Akulivik was appointed to sit on the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee. The next KRG Council will take place from February 24 to 27 and will be broadcast on TNI regional radio.

Esuma – Thinking Around Education

This winter, the Esuma Nunavik Table on School Perseverance is set to launch a call for project proposals. Local committees and organizations concerned about the student graduation rate in their communities will be invited to propose projects aimed at supporting and encouraging youth in their schooling and, ultimately, reducing school dropouts.

School dropout is not just a school problem. It is a social problem that is having negative impacts on the region's communities, economy and Inuit culture. The KRG has created the Esuma Table to address the complex phenomenon. Active participation on the Esuma Table includes more than ten organizations and companies, such as the Kativik School Board, Youth Employment Services Nunavik, the Federation of Cooperatives of Northern Québec and two mining companies.

Late last fall, the Esuma Table began delivering presentations to regional organizations to drum up support for the initiative. Following a presentation at its last sitting, the KRG Council adopted

a resolution backing Esuma and committing the organization to actively support concrete regional and local actions.

The Esuma school perseverance initiative is funded by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (employment and social solidarity) with a view to supporting actions to fight poverty and social exclusion. Education has been identified in Nunavik as key to reducing long-term poverty. It is also hoped that Esuma will help Nunavik organizations by expanding the number of workers in each community qualified to deliver all kinds of essential services.

Funding applications for school perseverance projects can be downloaded from www.krg.ca/en/employment-a-training/programs. Collaborative projects involving two or more groups are highly recommended. Applications must be submitted before February 28, 2014.

TNQ for Fairbanks, Alaska

The final roster of athletes for the 2014 Team Nunavik-Québec (TNQ) was announced during the closing ceremonies of the regional trials held in Kuujuaq from November 22 to 24. Bringing together Nunavik's most talented youth athletes, the regional trials were a great success. Competitions were held for Arctic Sports, Dene Games, Cross-Country Skiing, Badminton, Snowshoeing and Table Tennis.

Criteria for the final selection of athletes included performance at the regional trials and previous coastal trials, dedication to training, overall behaviour and attitude. TNQ athletes and cultural performers are scheduled to travel to Fairbanks, Alaska, in March for the 2014 Arctic Winter Games.



Regional trials for TNQ in November.

OHV Helmet Campaign

In the coming months, watch for the next On the Right Path initiative. The prevention and awareness campaign for off-highway vehicle (OHV) safety will be giving away snowmobile and ATV helmets to as many youth as possible. Private and public sector assistance for the contest is currently being sought.

Many Nunavik youth will recognize the prevention and awareness campaign from the popular high school tour organized in the spring of 2013. The workshops in every community involved classroom presentations, a pedal go-kart course and silkscreen printing on t-shirts promoting OHV safety.

To stay in touch with the prevention and awareness campaign, visit www.ontherightpathnunavik.ca or the Facebook page On the Right Path Nunavik.



Helmet use is being encouraged to reduce OHV related injuries among youth.